

**Military Collection**  
**State Archives of North Carolina**

**Leo H. Hardy Papers (WWI 113)**  
[World War I]

**Collection Number:** WWI 113

**Title:** Leo H. Hardy Papers

**Dates:** 1919-1920, undated

**Creator:** Leo H. Hardy

**Abstract**

The Leo H. Hardy Papers is composed of a small set of letters and a copy print of a photograph documenting the World War I service of Leo H. Hardy of Beaufort County, N.C., in the U.S. Navy from 1917 to 1920. The correspondence deals with Hardy's time as a sailor aboard the destroyer USS *J. Fred Talbott* (DD-156), while it was sent to Russia by the U.S. government in support of American, British, and other Allied countries' troops that were sent there in support of the White Russians who were fighting against the Bolsheviks as part of the 1917 Russian Revolution. The letters—almost all of which are written from ports in the Black Sea and Italy—document in great detail Hardy's experiences and perspectives of the happenings along the coastal areas of modern-day Georgia, Croatia, Ukraine, and Georgia. The letters also document the Ottoman Empire's role in the Armenian Genocides that occurred during and just after WWI. The correspondence is a rare look into the United States' role in Eastern European affairs from 1918 to 1920. There is also a copy print of an original portrait of Leo H. Hardy in his Navy uniform.

**Physical Description:** 4 folders.

**Language(s):** English

**Repository**

State Archives of North Carolina, 4614 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-4614

**Restrictions on Access:** There are no restrictions on accessing this collection.

**Restrictions on Use:** There are no restrictions on the use of this collection.

## **Preferred Citation**

[Item name or title], [Folder Numbers], Leo H. Hardy Papers, WWI 113, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C.

## **Acquisition**

The collection was received by the Military Collection at the State Archives of North Carolina from Jessie Hardy of Raleigh, N.C., with the donation completed in June 2003.

## **Processing Information**

There was no original order for the materials in the collection when they were received. The collection was reprocessed from its prior arrangement and storage in order to separate the materials in the collection into smaller groups by format and date of the materials, to allow for better long-term preservation of the collection. A lot of the letters have tears or are falling apart from how they had been stored before coming to the State Archives. Two of the letters are so fragile that they were placed in acid-free archival polypropylene photograph sleeves, to stabilize them for handling. One of the letters was too wide for the sleeve, so the sleeve was cut open on one side to be as a plastic sleeve that can open up as a jacket of sort.

The photograph in the collection is a copy print made from a copy negative of an original photograph still owned by the donor. The copy negative was made by State Archives' Photo Unit for retaining, and the original photograph was sent back to the donor. The negative is part of the Audiovisual Materials Unit, Special Collections Section, General Negatives collection, numbered as N.96.11.61. The copy print in this collection is simply provided for user reference purposes. Copies of the image should be made from the copy negative.

**Processed by:** Matthew M. Peek, February 2018.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged by format and date in folders.

## **Biographical Note**

Leo Hartland Hardy was born on December 1, 1894, in Beaufort County, N.C., to Joshua Albert and Mary Magnolia White Hardy. By 1900, the Hardy family was living in Beaufort County, and Joshua Hardy was working as a farmer. Nothing is known of Leo Hardy's life prior to World War I, other than that he was working for the Virginian Railway Company. He enlisted for military service for World War I in the U.S. Navy on April 14, 1917, with the rank of Apprentice Seaman. Hardy is listed for having enlisted at the actual ship the USS *Oklahoma* (BB-37), a Nevada-class battleship.

Hardy served aboard the *Oklahoma* until September 21, 1917, when he was sent to the USS *Solace* (AH-2), a Navy hospital ship (possibly due to illness or injury). By this time, he had reached the rank of Seaman Second Class. Leo Hardy appears to have been severely ill or injured, as he was next sent to the U.S. Naval Hospital in New York on, where he remained from

September 23 to October 3, 1917. Hardy's next stations were as follows: U.S. Navy receiving ship in New York City from October 3 to November 3, 1917; USS *Oklahoma* again from November 3, 1917, to January 26, 1918; and USS *Frank H. Buck* (ID 1613), commissioned into Navy service from the Associated Oil Company of San Francisco in 1918 as an oil tanker, from January 26 to at least November 11, 1918. The *Frank H. Buck* made six round-trips to Great Britain in 1918 to transport oil fuel for WWI Allied operations.

The U.S. Navy stopped official documentation of Hardy's WWI Navy service under active service on Armistice Day, but he continued to serve through 1920. Hardy was assigned to the USS *J. Fred Talbott* (DD-156), a U.S. Navy Wickes class destroyer, which was ordered with a number of other Navy vessels to operate off the Russian coast between 1918 and 1920. They were there in support of American, British, and other Allied countries' troops that were sent there in support of the White Russians who were fighting against the Bolsheviks as part of the 1917 Russian Revolution. The U.S. had sent 4,500 men and over 500 had been killed for this military action between September 1918 and July 1919. Hardy's ship also went to a region then under Austria-Hungary and other ports in the Mediterranean Sea during this period.

Hardy and the *Talbot* left from the U.S. for Mediterranean Sea port of Spalato, Dalmatia in then Austria-Hungary (modern-day Split, Croatia) around July 1919, arriving at the U.S. Naval Base in the Azores Islands, on July 16, 1919. By the fall of 1919, Hardy was stationed in Spalato aboard the *J. Fred Talbot* with 215 officers and sailors. By February 11, 1920, the *Talbott*, which had headed into the Black Sea, was docked in port at what was then Odessa, Russia (now Odessa, Ukraine). By February 16, 1920, Hardy and his ship was stationed in the port of what was then Batoum, Russia (now Batumi, Georgia) on the Black Sea. Hardy notes that the American Society for Relief in the Near East was ultimately responsible for helping to stave off a total annihilation of the Armenians in the Armenian Genocide by the Ottoman Empire during WWI, and he saw battles from the *Talbott* in Odessa and Batoum involving the local populations.

By March 15, 1920, Hardy and the *Talbott* was stationed in Venice, Italy. Although he thought he would head back to the U.S. by early April 1920, Hardy was issued a job in Italy related to WWI at the end of March 1920. He was ordered to travel throughout a number of small Italian towns, gathering the bodies of American Navy sailors killed in Italy during WWI. Hardy located the bodies in wartime graves in the Italian towns, preparing them for transportation back to the U.S., aboard the USS *Nereus* (AC-10), one of four Proteus-class colliers. A collier is a bulk cargo ship designed to carry coal, that apparently was converted to carrying the bodies and coffins of the dead sailors. After Leo Hardy returned to the U.S., he was discharged from active service in the U.S. Navy on June 30, 1920.

It appears Leo Hardy married Lillian W. Neal by 1922. By 1930, Leo Hardy was living in Charlotte County, Virginia, where he worked as a railroad agent. By 1933, he and his wife were living in Norfolk, Virginia, working as a railroad signalman. By 1940, Hardy was living in small town of Cullen in Charlotte County, Virginia, where he worked as station agent for the Virginian Railway. Leo H. Hardy died on July 29, 1974, and was buried in Roanoke Presbyterian Cemetery in Aspenwall, Virginia.

## **Scope and Content**

The collection is composed of a small set of letters and a copy print of a photograph documenting the World War I service of Leo H. Hardy of Beaufort County, N.C., in the U.S. Navy from 1917 to 1920. The correspondence deals with Hardy's time as a sailor aboard the destroyer USS *J. Fred Talbott* (DD-156), while it was sent to Russia by the U.S. government in support of American, British, and other Allied countries' troops that were sent there in support of the White Russians who were fighting against the Bolsheviks as part of the 1917 Russian Revolution. The letters—almost all of which are written from ports in the Black Sea and Italy—document in great detail Hardy's experiences and perspectives of the happenings along the coastal areas of modern-day Georgia, Croatia, Ukraine, and Georgia. The letters also document the Ottoman Empire's role in the Armenian Genocides that occurred during and just after WWI. The correspondence is a rare look into the United States' role in Eastern European affairs from 1918 to 1920. There is also a copy print of an original portrait of Leo H. Hardy in his Navy uniform.

## **Subject Terms**

### **Persons/Families**

Hardy, Leo H. (Leo Hartland), 1894-1974

### **Places**

Batumi (Georgia)  
Beaufort County (N.C.)  
Odesa (Ukraine)  
Split (Croatia)  
Venice (Italy)

### **Subject—Topical**

Armenian massacres, 1915-1923  
Frank H. Buck (Ship: ID-1613)  
J. Fred Talbott (Ship: DD-156)  
Mediterranean Sea  
Nereus (Ship: AC-10)  
Oklahoma (Ship: BB-37)  
Solace (Ship: AH-2)  
Soviet Union--History--Revolution, 1917-1921  
Virginian Railway

### **Material Types**

Correspondence  
Photographs

### **Collection Inventory**

<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	Correspondence	July-August 1919
2	Correspondence	November 1919
3	Correspondence	1920
4	Copy Print Photograph	Undated

**N.96.11.61:** Copy print of a copy negative of a portrait of Leo H. Hardy of Beaufort, N.C., wearing his Navy uniform, taken while he served in the U.S. Navy during World War I (undated) [Print from Audiovisual Materials Unit General Negative Collection].